Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on line 23 of page 11 and ending on line 9 of page 12 with the following amended paragraph:

According to the invention, when a speech segment is detected, the speech encoder 55 proceeds to edit the digitized speech data as it is received from the ADC 52 to remove perceptually insignificant portions. The speech encoder 55 then places the edited speech in a buffer to await transmission until the proper transmission resources have been allocated and the edited speech data can be transmitted. In contrast to conventional transmission methods which clip segments at the onset and can cause as a result important information contain therein to be lost, the present invention removes perceptually insignificant speech portions instead to catch up on the delays incurred in transmitting the information which would otherwise be clipped. According to the invention, the editing is deactivated only when sufficient time savings have been achieved to compensate for the additional time required to buffer and transmit the information which would have otherwise been discarded. As will be explained below in further detail, by editing and buffering the digitized speech data in the speech encoder 55, clipping of speech segments can be eliminated while reducing segment transmission delays. Once

2